THE TRIAL OF POLAND

INTRODUCTION

The Trial of Poland is a game that focuses on the rise of the Solidarity movement in Poland n 1980, from the point of view of the established powers confronted by a legitimate and ultimately existential threat. Each of the characters is a historic eastern bloc leader and, in his own way, a terrible person.

The game hinges on a single decision—will Poland be invaded?

This is a five player game. If you only have four, omit Gustáv Husák. If you have six, have the extra player serve as the announcer who reads handouts, and participate as Brezhnev's supercilious Politburo majordomo.

The play space is flexible—ideally, a conference table with some extra chairs that can be reconfigured as seats on a plane.

In preparation, print out the character information sheets and handouts. When everyone has had a chance to read about their character, begin the game with the reading of the first handout. Roleplay the scenes in order, reading handouts between scenes as indicated.

Also: VOY-check YERU-zelsk, STAN-ee-swav KANE-yuh, LEE-oh-nid BRESH-nev, AIR-rish HON-ecker, GUH-stuv HOO-suck.

SCENES

- Brezhnev player: Read "Solidarity" handout.

1. First flight to Moscow. Erich Honecker meets with Gustáv Husák.

- Brezhnev player: Read "The Invasion That Might Be" handout.

2. Second flight to Moscow. Stanisław Kania meets with Wojciech Jaruzelski.

- Brezhnev player: Read "The Secret Team" handout.

3. Unofficial Kremlin meeting. Leonid Brezhnev meets with whoever he wants, in whatever combination he wants.

- Brezhnev player: Read "News From the West" handout.

4. Kremlin hallway meeting. Stanisław Kania meets with whoever he wants, in whatever combination he wants.

5. Official Kremlin meeting. All characters meet. After a final conversation and a few heated arguments, Brezhnev makes his decision about intervention in Poland.

WOJCIECH JARUZELSKI

GENERAL AND POLISH MINISTER OF DEFENSE

You spent your youth as a political deportee, working in a Kazakh coal mine. It ruined your eyes and now you must wear dark glasses.

It is December, 1980. The Solidarity trade union movement in Poland is getting out of control. Their demands are unrealistic and their popular appeal is dangerous. Solidarity must be checked by one means or another. If the "democratic opposition" gains any more power, it will come at the expense of your own career.

You've been summoned to Moscow by comrade Brezhnev, who has invited the leaders of your Warsaw Pact neighbors Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic to join in a frank discussion with you about Solidarity.

Although you and First Secretary Kania disagree on more or less everything, you both know that a preemptive occupation of Poland by Warsaw pact forces will be an utter disaster. From your self-interested point of view, it would clearly expose your lack of control over the Polish military. In the worst case, Polish units might refuse to stand down. From the point of view of a Polish patriot, which you consider yourself, it would be a huge step back for the nation. Poland would become another Czechoslovakia, with Soviet troops in every city. Troops that would never go home.

You have been quietly preparing for the establishment of martial law throughout Poland. This is due diligence, of course, but you have serious doubts about the obedience of your troops, should you issue the order to fire upon their fellow Poles. Many soldiers sympathize with Solidarity, to their discredit.

Ultimately, the decision to intervene in Poland or not will be made by Brezhnev.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST INTERVENTION

- Soviet legitimacy will be called into question if they invade another sovereign ally, as they did in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968.
- The arrival of German troops—even socialist comrades—will stir up unpleasant memories and feed the fuel of dissent.
- Soviet financial aid can prevent a total collapse of the Polish economy. Perhaps this, combined with a stiffened backbone in dealing with Solidarity, can solve the "Polish problem".
- You are secretly arranging for the imposition of martial law. Your military can handle Polish protesters.

WHO IS WHO

Soviet leader **Leonid Brezhnev** is old and failing, subject to the manipulations of quicker, cleverer men. But he is still the old lion of Soviet politics and he is far from stupid.

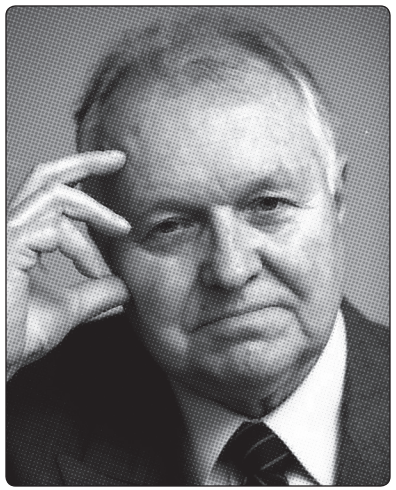
Erich Honecker runs East Germany like a walled garden and demands absolute obedience in exchange for fabulous prosperity, at least by eastern bloc standards. He's someone to emulate.

Gustáv Husák is a grinning marionette whose strings end in the Kremlin. This puppet has a special mechanism just for nodding his head.

Stanisław Kania is your boss, First Secretary of Poland. He has a soft heart and hands worn smooth by excessive wringing. You suspect that Kania sympathizes with Solidarity—he's certainly made enough concessions to the louts.

STANISŁAW KANIA

POLISH FIRST SECRETARY



You are First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party.

It is December, 1980. The Solidarity trade union movement in Poland is getting out of control. Their demands are unrealistic and their popular appeal is dangerous. Solidarity must be checked by one means or another, and you must find a way that doesn't involve Soviet tanks. Your top priority must be to convince Brezhnev that a political solution is possible.

Candidly, a political solution may not be possible.

Although you and Minister of Defense Jaruzelski disagree on more or less everything, you both know that a preemptive occupation of Poland by Warsaw pact forces will be an utter disaster. From your self-interested point of view, it would clearly expose your lack of control over the Polish political machine. From the point of view of a Polish patriot, which you consider yourself, it would be a huge step back for the nation. Poland would become another Czechoslovakia, with Soviet troops in every city. Troops that would never go home.

You've been summoned to Moscow by comrade Brezhnev, who has invited the leaders of your Warsaw pact neighbors Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic to join in a frank discussion with you about Solidarity.

Ultimately, the decision to intervene in Poland or not will be made by Brezhnev.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST INTERVENTION

- Solidarity is a socialist movement that does not seek to overthrow the state. A political compromise is possible.
- The Polish people will rise up to defend their homeland. Even if angels invaded Poland, they would be treated as bloodthirtsy vampires. (As far as you know this is a lie, but a compelling one)
- Soviet legitimacy will be called into question if they invade another sovereign ally, as they did in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968.

WHO IS WHO

Soviet leader **Leonid Brezhnev** is old and failing, subject to the manipulations of quicker, cleverer men. But he is still the old lion of Soviet politics and he is far from stupid.

Erich Honecker is an ice-hearted ghoul whose nation is one vast penal colony. He has a deep appreciation for political violence.

Gustáv Husák is a grinning marionette whose strings end in the Kremlin. This puppet has a special mechanism just for nodding his head.

Wojciech Jaruzelski, your Minister of Defense, is an ambitious fool in the Honecker-Husák mold, a man who wants your job and is ruthless enough to get it some day. He is also your only ally in preventing the occupation of Poland.

LEONID BREZHNEV

GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE SOVIET COMMUNIST PARTY

You are one of the most powerful men in the entire world.

It is December, 1980. The trade union movement in Poland is completely out of control. Their demands are unrealistic and their popular appeal is dangerous. Solidarity must be checked by one means or another. The credibility of the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact itself is on the line.

You are old and feeble. Young, ambitious political dogs bay and nip at your heels. You need to be decisive and project your considerable—if waning—power.

Ultimately, the decision to intervene in Poland or not is yours to make.

WHO IS WHO

Erich Honecker is one of the few Warsaw pact functionaries who will give you his unvarnished opinion, and you appreciate his candor. Even if he is a sociopathic monster who has turned East Germany into a bizarre police state.

Gustáv Husák is the President of Czechoslovakia. You chose him yourself as the most harmless and utterly compliant political tool available. He has not disappointed you.

Wojciech Jaruzelski, Polish Minister of Defense, spent his youth as a guest of the Soviet Union, a slave in a Kazakh coal mine. That he is your staunchest ally in Poland now says volumes about his character.

Stanisław Kania is Polish First Secretary and something of a cypher. Everyone tells you he is a closet reformer but thusfar he has been compliant, loyal and utterly dependable. His approach to Solidarity has been pragmatic, but there are limits to pragmatism.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST INTERVENTION

- Soviet financial aid can prevent a total collapse of the Polish economy. Perhaps this, combined with a stiffened backbone in dealing with Solidarity, can solve the Polish problem.
- Cajoled and out-maneuvered by Politburo functionaries, you pulled the trigger on the invasion of Afghanistan, which is not going well at all. Sometimes force is not the right answer.
- Solidarity is a socialist movement that does not seek to overthrow the state.
- Soviet legitimacy may be called into question if they invade another sovereign ally, as they did in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968.
- Kania is loyal but weak. His successor would be drawn from the ranks of Polish hardliners and would be an unknown quantity.

ARGUMENTS FOR INTERVENTION

- You are the architect of the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia and subsequent installation of the simpering toad Gustáv Husák as President. You understand that sometimes force is the right answer.
- You know that Poland is a lot more similar to Czechoslovakia than it is to Afghanistan.
- Not crushing Solidarity will encourage it, as well as similar movements in other eastern bloc countries.
- First Secretary Kania was specifically put in power to take a hard line where his predecessor had failed. He has demonstrated his reluctance or inability to quell Solidarity through peaceful means.
- The Americans really, really don't want this to happen. That alone may be reason enough to move forward with intervention plans.

ERICH HONECKER

OVERLORD OF EAST GERMANY

You are the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany. Under your watch, East Germany has enjoyed the greatest prosperity in the eastern bloc. It has also been transformed into a Kafkaesque police state unlike anything the world has ever known.

It is December, 1980. The trade union movement in Poland known as *Solidarity* is getting out of control. Their demands are unrealistic and their popular appeal is dangerous. Solidarity must be checked by one means or another. It is a cancer that could well infect your own country.

You are a political pragmatist and, in the end, have little use for ideology. In your own country dissent is simply not tolerated. Your neighbor to the east is far too lenient for your taste.

You find the Polish government to be a laughable collection of rubes, acceding point after point to the fascistic trade unions and pro-western opposition. In your eyes a political solution is no longer possible. The solutions that will work are administrative - mass arrests and indefinite detention - and military. If you were in charge of Poland, Solidarity would be awash with blood.

Ultimately, the decision to intervene in Poland or not will be made by Brezhnev. As an old, feeble autocrat, his judgement is susceptible to gentle persuasion from good friends like you.

ARGUMENTS FOR INTERVENTION

- Solidarity is a counterrevolutionary cancer on Polish society that is bent on the destruction of the socialist order. First Secretary Kania has demonstrated his inability to quell it through peaceful means.

- Intervention worked in Hungary and Czechoslovakia and it will work again. The longer action is delayed, the more aggressive the action must be.

- America and the west are working hard to prevent the Warsaw Pact from exercising its prerogative in Poland. This alone is a good reason to move ahead with intervention.

WHO IS WHO

Soviet leader **Leonid Brezhnev** is old and failing, subject to the manipulations of quicker, cleverer men like yourself. But he is still the old lion of Soviet politics and he is far from stupid.

Gustáv Husák is President of Czechoslovakia and owes his entire existence to Brezhnev. He is not likely to forget that.

Wojciech Jaruzelski, Polish Minister of Defense, is a typical career officer and functionary. He'll do what he's told.

Stanisław Kania is First Secretary of Poland and something of a loose cannon. His credentials are in order but his constant negotiating with parasites like Solidarity automatically makes his loyalties suspect. If nothing else he is a weakling.

GUSTÁV HUSÁK

PRESIDENT OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

You are the President of Czechoslovakia, installed by the Soviets following their crackdown there twelve years ago. You are Moscow's most loyal friend among the Warsaw pact nations, always eager to please.

It is December, 1980. The trade union movement in Poland known as *Solidarity* is getting out of control. Their demands are unrealistic and their popular appeal is dangerous. Solidarity must be checked by one means or another. Polish forces were part of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, and frankly turnabout is fair play.

The decision to intervene in Poland or not will be made by Brezhnev, as is proper.

ARGUMENTS FOR INTERVENTION

- Poland in 1980 looks a lot like Czechoslovakia in 1968. A brief but savage show of force will demonstrate on the world stage that the Warsaw pact is a vital and effective organization dedicated to defending socialist principles.

- Permanent occupation by Soviet troops has done wonders for stifling internal dissent in your country and it would work in Poland as well.

- You've been told that if you play your cards right, in a few years you might be awarded Hero of the Soviet Union honors. How splendid would that be?

ARGUMENT AGAINST INTERVENTION

- The Polish people might rise up to defend their homeland, which would be somewhat understandable given their tragic history of invasion and occupation. This would be a disaster for everyone involved.

WHO IS WHO

Soviet leader **Leonid Brezhnev** is one of the greatest men who has ever lived - a lion of socialism and the person responsible for your rise to power and greatness.

Erich Honecker is an ice-hearted ghoul who has turned East Germany into one vast penal colony. You fear him, but that fear as tempered by admiration and not a little amazement at his cruel efficiency.

Wojciech Jaruzelski, Polish Minister of Defense, is a good communist and a competent General. You favor him and suspect he'll be First Secretary some day. Perhaps soon.

Stanisław Kania is your Warsaw pact peer and First Secretary of Poland. He has a soft heart and hands worn smooth by excessive wringing. You suspect that Kania sympathizes with Solidarity - he's certainly made enough concessions to the louts.

HANDOUT A

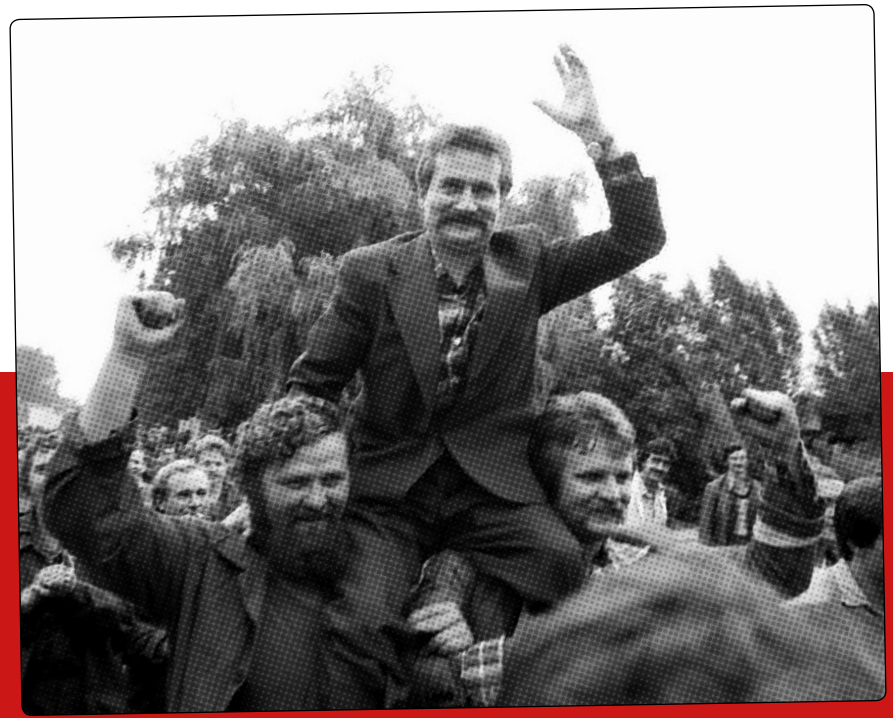
SOLIDARITY

Solidarity is just months old, a social and political movement designed to cripple - but not replace - Poland's communist power structure.

It's the perfect wedge with which to hammer the establishment you so capably represent. Trade unionists and workers holding a mirror up to the socialist government and asking it what it sees. And what does it see? A country ruined by corruption and incompetence, crushing debt, a betrayal of socialist ideals, ugly and inescapable truths.

Solidarity, formally registered as a political organization, is hugely popular and an obvious threat to the status quo. Its influence increases by the day. The growth of the movement, if unchecked, threatens to change the political landscape of Poland forever.

The Soviet Union cannot allow that. So far they've watched and listened, making symbolic gestures like activating reserve military units, re-routing troops for the annual "Soyuz" joint exercises, and sending warships to visit Polish ports. But that may all be about to change, depending on the outcome of a conference Leonid Brezhnev has called...



HANDOUT B

THE INVASION THAT MIGHT BE

If Poland is to be invaded, here's what will happen:

1. 15 Soviet, two Czechoslovak and an East German division all assemble near the Polish borders. This is already underway.

2. Once given the signal by Soviet chief of staff Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, the units will roll in under the pretext of the annual "Soyuz" joint training exercise, scheduled to begin on 8 December.

3. Marshal Viktor Kulikov, supreme commander of Warsaw Pact forces, will order Polish units to stand down. Their contribution will be to do nothing.

4. The 18 non-Polish divisions will rapidly deploy to key urban and industrial centers to encourage an end to civil disorder and "stand ready to demonstrate readiness for the defense of socialism".

5. The Polish state will declare martial law. Troops loyal to General Wojciech Jaruzelski will augment or replace civilian police in maintaining order.

5. The Polish internal security apparatus, under cover of martial law, will dismember Solidarity.

It's worth noting that without the complete cooperation and active assistance of the Polish government this force is far too small to get the job done - it would take at least twice as many divisions. In the unlikely but worrisome event of active Polish resistance to invasion, Soviet estimates put the troop total to quell resistance at 45 combat divisions.

HANDOUT C

THE SECRET TEAM

The Kremlin quietly assembled a blue-ribbon commission composed of men who want Brezhnev's job. It includes KGB chief Yuri Andropov, foreign minister Andrei Gromyko, senior party ideologist Mikhail A. Suslov, and defense minister Dmitri Ustinov.

Their findings:

- Solidarity is a legitimate worker's movement, proletarian in nature and in accord with socialist principles.

- Military intervention may not be wise. This ought to carry some weight, since Ustinov and Andropov are the fucking architects of the Afghanistan quagmire.

- For his part, Suslov feels that a political solution would be best - an invasion would harm the reputation of the Soviet Union as the cradle of socialism.

- Gromyko, unhelpfully, simply reports "we cannot afford to lose Poland". How you would lose Poland by rolling in with 15 Soviet divisions remains unclear.

П. О мероприятиях, посвященных 73-й годовщине Великой Октябрьской социалистической революции.

(т.т.Горбачев, Бурокявичюс, Гуренко, Дзасохов, Ивашко, Каримов, Лучинский, Масалиев, Махкамов, Назарбаев, Прокофьев, Рубикс, Семенова, Силлари, Соколов, Строев, Шенин, Бакланов, Гидаспов, Купцов, Манаенков, Фалин)

Секретариату ЦК доработать с учетом обмена мнениями на заседании Политбюро ЦК представленные предложения по данному вопросу.

Ш. О мерах в связи с преследованиями Партии демократического социализма (ГДР).

(т.т.Горбачев, Бурокявичюс, Гуренко, Дзасохов, Ивашко, Каримов, Лучинский, Масалиев, Махкамов, Назарбаев, Прокофьев, Рубикс, Семенова, Силлари, Соколов, Строев, Шенин, Бакланов, Гидаспов, Купцов, Манаенков, Фалин)

Тов.Фалину В.М. доработать предложения по этому вопросу с учетом обсуждения на заседании Политбюро.

HANDOUT D

NEWS FROM THE WEST

American intelligence services have been busy trying to prevent a mobilization of troops in defense of socialism in Poland. Western news outlets have been flooding their pages and airwaves with stories of military mobilizations in the USSR, East Germany and Czechoslovakia, spoon fed to them by the CIA. Everybody knows what the Warsaw pact is up to.

Lame-duck President Jimmy Carter has sent a cable, clearly authored by National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, warning of "the cost of aggression" and the "benefits of restraint". This empty posturing is a little infuriating, but the new administration coming in January is an unknown quantity, already rattling sabers.

AP Photo

This is a map showing the Polish border areas.

Soviets Close Polish Border, Reports Claim

BERLIN (AP) — The Soviet Union has closed East German areas along the Polish border, Western allied sources said today, and there was a report that Red Army troops on the Soviet border with Poland were placed on the highest state of alert. The Soviet Union denied the reports "categorically."

Reports of the new actions on both sides of Poland came as Poland's Communist Party Central Committee met in Warsaw to discuss the continuing government-worker conflict that has caused concern to the Soviet Union and Pol-

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U.S. Says Russia Poised To Act

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Carter conferred Sunday with the National Security Council over the Polish crisis, and a White House official said Soviet intervention in Poland "could take place because preparations for it are completed."

The White House said in an announcement that Soviet preparations "for possible intervention in Poland" have been completed. A senior White House official stepped back from an assertion he made last week that a Soviet intervention in Poland wasn't imminent. The official stated Sunday: "As of now, we're not in a position to say whether it is imminent or not. We are in a position to note that it could take place because preparations for it are completed."

"It is our hope that no such intervention will take place," the White House said in a written statement handed to reporters. The National Security Council meeting lasted one hour and 50 minutes Sunday afternoon. At the end, House and Senate Democratic and Republican officials — House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill, D-Mass., Rep. John Rhodes, R-Ariz., Sen. Alan Cranston, D-Calif., and Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska — were called to the White House for a briefing.

Before he went to church Sunday morning, Carter conferred with his Special Coordinating Committee, chaired by Zbigniew Brzezinski, his national security assistant, and security council officials who form a "crisis management committee."

The White House statement was essentially similar to one made Friday by Adm. Daniel Murphy, deputy assistant secretary of defense for policy review, who said Soviet forces were ready to move into Poland.

But it was the first acknowledgement by the White House that the Soviet actitivies, which had been monitored for some time, appeared complete.

"This has a great deal more weight, coming from the White House," said Deputy White House Press Secretary Ray Jenkins.

White House officials would not say whether the United States had determined that there

(See POLAND on Page 2A)

Kennedy Honorees

U.S.Panel Probes For Military Murder Ties

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (AP) — A U.S. presidential commission met Sunday with Roman Catholic leaders and "top military brass" in efforts to determine if the armed forces were involved in the murders of three American nuns and a social worker. Two civilian members of the ruling junta threatened to resign if violence continued.

The head of El Salvador's Catholic church, Bishop Arturo Rivera y Damas, blamed the five member military-civilian junta for the deaths in a statement read at the Sunday Mass in San Salvador's Metropolitan Cathedral and broadcast throughout the country on radio.

Later in the day he met with the U.S. delegation at his office, according to a U.S. Embassy spokesman.

military brass." He said the delegation, sent by President Carter, met Saturday night with two civilian members of the junta, Jose Napoleon Duarte and Antonio Morales Erlich.

The two men, members of the Christian Democratic Party, announced at a news conference Sunday that they would leave the government unless "profound measures" were taken to end political violence that has left 8,500 people dead this year in this embattled Central American nation.

Duarte said the party was ready to continue working for a solution but it was "also ready to declare publicly that it is not going to participate ever in a government that does not have the capacity to confront and the authority to resolve the problems." He did not say how long the party would wait

THANKS!

I hope you enjoyed The Trial of Poland. I certainly enjoyed bringing it to you and if you have comments—particularly if you play it—I would like to talk to you. I can be reached at jason@bullypulpitgames.com or @jmstar on Twitter.

None of this was done in a vacuum—there's a whole community of talented, generous, creative people out there making and sharing their work. I borrowed from a few and stole from many, who in turn eagerly did the same.

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